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NEWS RELEASE

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End-of-year commencement exercises typically stretch stadium and arena capacities to the limits. With so many guests packed into unfamiliar arenas and stadiums, any emergency situation can turn deadly. Here's what you can do this year during graduation ceremonies to keep safe, whether you're observing or participating.

- **Be careful where you park.** When you arrive, don't park in fire lanes or in front of any doors that lead from the building. If an evacuation is necessary, vehicles parked in front of exits will seriously hinder people from escaping the building.
- **Once inside, identify the two closest emergency exits.** If you need to evacuate, keep both exits in mind and choose the most accessible one.
- **Keep aisles and walkways clear.** Don't place bags, gifts, or any items that may hinder exiting or pose a trip hazard in aisles and walkways.
- **Follow directions given by staff, school administrators, and event coordinators.** Whether giving information about tornado shelters and evacuation plans, or limiting the occupancy inside the venue to safe levels, realize that these directions are for your benefit and safety. Please follow the guidance of these trained individuals.

If you are a staff member, school administrator, or event coordinator, here are some things to remember:

- **Before the event, check all exits.** Make sure they are operable, accessible, and in good working order. Make sure there are no loose items in the area that could block exits or become trip hazards.
- **Check all emergency equipment.** Make sure your annual and monthly tests are current for emergency lights and generators. Ensure that the fire alarm system is functioning normally and operable.

- **Check written emergency procedures and shelters.** In the event of severe weather, make sure emergency shelters are accessible and ready for use. Make sure all ushers and staff members know their roles in the event of an emergency. Verify that pre-written announcements for fire, severe weather, or bomb threats are available to announcers. Monitor weather conditions during the event.
- **Strictly observe occupancy limits.** These limits were established for a reason, and they are not simply suggestions. At no time can more than the set maximum number of occupants be admitted to the event.
- **At the event, make a public safety announcement.** This is required by state law when events are attended by more than 300 people.
- **During the event, check aisles and exits.** Make sure these paths are clear and free of anything that could impair exiting.
- **Know whether you are required to provide trained crowd managers.** At events attended by more than 1,000 persons, trained crowd managers/ushers shall be provided at a ratio of at least one crowd manager for every 250 occupants.

Commencement can pose a serious threat because of the sheer volume of spectators and participants. By working together, attendees, participants, and event coordinators can work together to make this year's graduation as safe as possible.